Holding Hands for Walking or Pushing to Fly?
Advisors' Leadership Styles to Train Future Faculty

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A faculty member's career is divided into three parts: the early, mid-level, and senior faculty periods. The graduate education period falls into the first part (Golde, 1997). Given the transitory state of often being a student and a teacher at the same time, this development stage can be challenging. Austin (2002) examined the importance of the socialization process between graduate students and advisors during this stage and found that close interactions between them (i.e. graduate students and advisors) can lead to better professional growth for the graduate students. Nyquis et al. (1999), however, indicated there is a gap between graduate students' expectations and their institutions' commitment, using the term "Social Darwinism" to describe the tremendous workload and emotional toil that often garners very little attention from advisors.

The organizational behavior literature suggests two distinct leadership styles that could also be translated into advisors' mentoring styles. They are transformational (which focuses on motivation, inspirational outlooks on future, and teamwork) and transactional (which focuses on the value of the rules and fixed processes) leadership, both of which affect supervisees' (graduate students in this case) performance differently (Nguyen, 2009). However, our understanding of how the leadership styles displayed by advisors affect graduate students' current and the future career success is very limited. Moreover, little research has been done to examine the experiences of graduate students in the clothing and textile (C&T) disciplines. This research was designed to identify the leadership styles of advisors as perceived by current C&T graduate students to get a better picture of how C&T advisors are training future faculty.

A quantitative study was conducted to fill the gap. Nguyen's (2009) 19 items measuring five dimensions of transformational leadership (Cronbach alpha = .925) and 15 items measuring four dimensions of transactional leadership (Cronbach alpha = .799) were used. After the approval of the Institution Review Board, graduate students in the C&T disciplines were recruited. The publically available contact information of potential participants was collected from the websites of the International Textile and Apparel Association and C&T departments in the United States. A total of 75 names and email addresses were collected, and all of them were invited to the survey. After three weeks, 44 usable responses were collected (a 58.6% effective response rate) in spring 2016. Descriptive and factor analyses were conducted to assess the results.

Overall, the participants rated their advisors as having higher transformational leadership (Cronbach *alpha* = .934; M = 3.95; *S.D.* = .91) than transaction leadership (Cronbach *alpha* = .738; M = 2.59; *S.D.* = .55). Within **transformational leadership**, attributes displaying inspirational motivation (e.g., talking optimistically about future*; M* = 4.15; *S.D.* = 1.02) and individual consideration (M = 4.01; *S.D.* = 1.10) had the highest means. Idealized influence (e.g.,

instilling pride in the students for being associated with him/her; *M* = 3.75; *S.D.* = .99) and idealized influence behavior (e.g., going beyond self-interest for the good of the group; *M*=3.89; *S.D.* = 1.05) were the two lowest attributes of transformation leadership.

In analyzing **transactional leadership,** it was found that advisors in C &T disciplines display more leadership attributes related to contingent awards (e.g., discussing specific terms about the responsibility to achieve performance targets; *M* = 3.89; *S.D.* = .98) and management by exception-active (e.g., keeping track of all mistakes and directing attention toward failures to meet standards; *M* = 3.187; *S.D.* = 1.29). Meanwhile, the means for management by exception-passive (e.g., waiting to interfere until the problem becomes serious; *M* = 1.67; *S.D.* = .89) and 'laissez faire' (e.g., giving enough freedom for students to choose their own courses of action; *M* = 1.62; *S.D.* = .82) were the lowest.

The results of this research have several implications. First, it is very positive to note that today's C&T advisors exhibit high level of transformational leadership to graduate students. However, the low rate of advisors' going beyond self-interest for the good of the group warns us of a lack of collaborative environments within the department setting. Furthermore, the sense of pride was found to be less instilled among C&T graduate students by their advisors. If the C&T discipline wants to continue to succeed in the future, it is critical for advisors to instill pride and to encourage graduate students to do extra for the good of the team. Second, the study findings showed that today's C&T advisors are very much hands on with their graduate students, which is very important for graduate education. However, if this approach prevents the advisors from giving sufficient freedom for graduate students to choose their own course of action, they may not be successful as an independent faculty member. Future research can be done to compare the leadership styles in related disciplines of social sciences, which can help in broadening the strategies used to train future academicians.

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